

FACT SHEET | Medical Cannabis

Providing Safe and Effective Options for Seriously Ill Minnesotans

Recognizing the potential value of medical cannabis for treating some serious conditions, the Dayton Administration, lawmakers and advocates worked together to develop a compromise that allows suffering Minnesotans to use medical cannabis in a safe manner. The compromise approach addresses the medical community's desire for medical oversight and for gathering quality information about patients' health impacts. It also accommodates the safety and security concerns of the law enforcement community.

How Medical Cannabis Will Help Minnesotans

- **Help for Seriously Ill Minnesotans.** This new law creates a safe and secure method of providing medical cannabis to those patients whose health care provider certifies them to be suffering from conditions including:
 - Cancer associated with severe/chronic pain, nausea or severe vomiting, or cachexia or severe wasting;
 - Glaucoma;
 - HIV/AIDS;
 - Tourette's Syndrome;
 - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS);
 - Seizures, including those characteristic of epilepsy;
 - Severe and persistent muscle spasms, including those characteristic of multiple sclerosis;
 - Crohn's Disease; and
 - Terminal illness, with a life expectancy of less than one year, if the illness or treatment produces severe/chronic pain, nausea or severe vomiting, cachexia or severe wasting.
- **Closely Monitoring Benefits and Risks.** The new law creates a patient registry process for monitoring and evaluating the health impacts experienced by patients taking medical cannabis. This information will help health professionals broaden their understanding of the benefits, risks and side effects of medical cannabis.
- **Medical Cannabis Task Force.** The new law also establishes a medical cannabis task force that will conduct an assessment of medical cannabis therapeutic research. The task force will evaluate the state's medical cannabis program and the impact of medical cannabis in Minnesota.

How the New Law Will Work

- **Step 1.** Minnesotans seeking to use medical cannabis to treat one of the qualified medical conditions will receive certification of their condition from a Minnesota-licensed health care practitioner (a doctor, physician assistant or advanced practice nurse who is providing care to the patient). NOTE: The Commissioner of Health will register a designated caregiver for a patient if the patient's health care provider certifies that the patient is unable to self-administer medication.
- **Step 2.** After receipt of a patient's application, the Commissioner of Health will enroll the patient in the registry program and issue a registry verification. Applications will be denied only under specific circumstances, such as an applicant providing false information or an applicant lacking certification that he or she has one of the qualifying medical conditions.
- **Step 3.** Minnesotans issued a registry verification will be eligible to receive medical cannabis for their condition at one of the distribution facilities set up by the state's medical cannabis manufacturers. Registered patients will pay a fee to help cover program costs.

- **Step 4.** As part of their certification and participation in the program, patients must agree to continue treatment for their condition and their health care provider must agree to provide ongoing reports about the patient's health status/condition.

How Medical Cannabis Will be Provided

- **Two Manufacturers.** The medical cannabis provided to patients in the registry program will come from two in-state manufacturers licensed and inspected by the state, unless the state obtains an adequate supply of federally sourced medical cannabis products by August 1, 2014.
- **Regulated by the Health Department.** To become registered manufacturers of medical cannabis, entities must apply to the Commissioner of Health for consideration. The Commissioner will consider multiple factors in assessing manufacturer applications including fees to be charged. The Commissioner will require registered manufacturers to supply medical cannabis products to patients by July 1, 2015.
- **Medical Liquid, Pills, and Vapor.** Medical cannabis will be provided to patients in approved forms, such as a liquid, pill or vaporized delivery method that does not require the use of dried leaves or plant form but allows for whole plant extracts.
- **Eight Distribution Centers.** Each registered manufacturer will operate no more than four distribution facilities around the state. Facilities will be located based on geographical need and to improve patient access.
- **Ensuring the Highest Quality Medical Products.** Registered manufacturers must contract with a laboratory for testing the quality and consistency of the medical cannabis products.

Medical Cannabis by the Numbers

July 1, 2015	Date when medical cannabis will be made available to registered patients.
2	Number of medical cannabis manufacturing facilities approved to operate in Minnesota.
8	Number of distribution centers dispensing medical cannabis in Minnesota (manufacturers may phase in facilities over time).
\$200	Medical cannabis registry annual enrollment fee.
\$50	Reduced enrollment fee for Minnesotans receiving Social Security disability, Supplemental Security Insurance payments or enrolled in medical assistance or MinnesotaCare.
\$3,000	Potential fine, along with jail time, for a person found guilty of intentionally transferring medical cannabis to a person other than a registered patient.
23	Number of medical cannabis task force members, including four state legislators, four consumers or patients enrolled in the registry program, representatives of health care providers, law enforcement, substance abuse treatment providers, and the commissioners of health, public safety and human services.